



Iowa Outdoors

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.com

www.iowanaturestore.com

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

May 3, 2005

1. Opinion Survey Sent to Deer Hunters
2. Iowans Gearing Up for Free Camping Weekend
3. Lake of Three Fires is Filling, Campground is Open
4. Public Comment Sought for Iowa Comprehensive Wildlife Plan
5. Spring Trout Fishing – by Joe Wilkinson
6. Tree and Shrub Seedlings Still Available
7. Final Prairie Rescue Events Set for May 14
8. Iowa Fishing Report

OPINION SURVEY SENT TO DEER HUNTERS

Iowa Department of Natural Resource officials are asking deer hunters for help to determine if the factors contributing to declining hunter numbers nationwide are applicable in Iowa. The information will help define what hurdles hunters face today, and what issues the DNR needs to address to promote and enhance deer hunting in Iowa.

Research from other states suggests multiple factors – such as competing interests and obligations, restricted access, age and lack of hunting partners -- contribute to declining hunting participation. Iowa DNR researchers are trying to determine if those same factors apply to Iowa deer hunters.

“In Iowa, we know that some hunters hunt deer every year while others hunt only sporadically,” said research biologist Steve Roberts. Since having a large number of deer hunters hunting deer each year is important in reducing Iowa’s deer population, the DNR needs to know if the factors that control Iowa hunters’ participation is any different than the factors that drive participation in other states.

The help comes in the form of a survey, which examines factors that affect participation in deer hunting. Roughly 14,000 Iowa deer hunters were mailed a postcard in early April asking them to respond via the internet. Due to slow response, those who did not respond were recently sent a second printed survey with postage paid envelope. Responses via the internet are still preferred to expedite analysis of the information and reduce costs; however if a hunter does not have access to the internet or chooses not

respond online, they should fill out the printed survey and return it in the postage paid envelop they receive in the mail.

“We knew that several individuals, but not everyone, had access to the internet and we knew that some people might rather respond to a printed survey than a survey that used the internet,” said research biologist Peter Fritzell, who is helping analyze the data. “Either way, the information is crucial to improving the deer hunting experience in Iowa

For questions regarding the survey call Fritzell or Roberts at (515) 432-2823.

###

IOWANS GEARING UP FOR FREE CAMPING WEEKEND

DES MOINES – Campers across Iowa are making plans to enjoy a weekend of free camping in Iowa State Parks, Recreation Areas and Forests May 13, 14 and 15, 2005.

Camping in Iowa State Parks is on a first-come, first-serve basis with no reservations being accepted. Iowa campers will need to register as usual with the exception of paying for the campsite. If Iowans show up on Thursday before the free weekend to register, they will need to pay for Thursday night. Nonresidents will need to pay the appropriate campsite fee during the weekend.

If the weather forecast is good, many of the popular park campgrounds will fill up quickly. "Free camping weekend will be handled just like any other busy holiday weekend in state parks," says Sherry Arntzen, with the DNR state parks bureau. Arntzen suggests that campers call before heading out to the park to make sure sites are available. She also added campers might want to consider trying a new park. "There are a number of park gems located throughout the state that highlight some of Iowa's most beautiful landscapes."

Again this year, all participating state parks will have interpretive programs offered throughout the weekend. Programs include nocturnal animals at Geode State Park in Henry County; Gyotaku (ancient Japanese folk art of painting fish) at Lake Manawa State Park in Pottawattamie County; bird watching program at Pilot Knob in Winnebago County; and a fisheries demonstration with the electroshock boat at Green Valley State Park in Union County. Campers and local area residents interested in attending the interpretive program, should either call the park office directly or visit the state parks website for information on the program content, times and locations.

All DNR managed state parks, recreation areas and forest campgrounds with the exception of Bellevue are participating. Bellevue campground is closed due to a campground renovation. Lake Keomah State Park will participate; however, a portion of the campground remains closed for an electrical upgrade project. For a complete listing

of the state parks, recreation areas and forests participating, and other information about the weekend, visit the state park website at www.exploreiowaparks.com.

For more information, contact Arntzen at 515-242-6233

###

LAKE OF THREE FIRES FILLING, CAMPGROUND IS OPEN

BEDFORD - The in-lake improvements at Lake of Three Fires are complete and the lake is filling. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has invested \$3.2 million on lake and park improvements at Three Fires since 1997.

Largemouth bass and bluegills were stocked this spring and the DNR will stock channel catfish and crappies later this year.

All campsites and cabins are open for campers, but the shower building at the main campground is closed and will be replaced by a new shower building later this summer. Campers should use the shower building at the other campground. The equestrian campground is also open.

Work included installing riprap to protect the shoreline, a new boat ramp, stake beds and other in-lake fish attracting structure and 33 structures in the watershed to prevent silt from entering the lake. A newly constructed spillway will prevent carp from re-entering the lake. The fish population was renovated in the fall of 2004 and good fishing should return by late 2006 and should be excellent in 2007. The dredging project removed the 38,600 dump truck loads of silt from the lake.

The DNR has plans to install a large wetland in the summer of 2006 in the public hunting ground above the lake, which will further protect the water quality of the lake and offer additional hunting opportunities in the area.

###

PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT FOR IOWA COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE PLAN

Following almost two years of work by more than 100 people, including experts, agency and organization representatives and other interested individuals, a new plan for Iowa's wildlife is nearing completion, and a draft is now available for public review and comment. Copies of the plan will be available as noted below.

"Securing a Future for Fish and Wildlife: a Conservation Legacy for Iowans" is the first attempt ever to enumerate most of the state's wildlife and evaluate the status of

each species. It also examines stresses on wild creatures or their habitats and lays out visions and strategies to conserve wildlife over the next 25 years.

Also known as the Iowa Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, the document identifies 999 species of birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians, mussels (freshwater clams), land snails, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. These groups were selected for inclusion because there is sufficient data to identify all of the known species, or because DNR has statutory authority for conservation and management of the listed groups. Fully one-third of all species found in Iowa are of concern due to their decline across the state. Plants are not listed because it is intended as a wildlife plan. However, plant communities are an important part of the *habitats* for most of Iowa's wildlife and are addressed in terms of habitat throughout the plan.

Comprehensive Wildlife Plans are required of any government entity receiving federal money through the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program. All 50 states, five U.S. territories, the District of Columbia and several Native American tribes receive these annual grants from Congress. The Iowa DNR has been allocated more than \$3 million since 2001, with funds used to enhance its Wildlife Diversity Program, through increased research, habitat protection, and management for "species of greatest conservation need." Iowa must match the SWG income dollar-for-dollar with non-federal funds. Should the required comprehensive plans fail to be accepted by Congress this fall, states may lose their qualification for funding.

The public is invited to review the Iowa plan and submit comments to the DNR. Comments will be reviewed, considered and the plan may be appropriately modified before a final version is prepared this summer. All comments or suggestions will be maintained on file with the plan for future reference.

In order to meet timetables for review, completion and submission to Congress, the version available for public review still is undergoing some format changes. Therefore, the final version may not exactly resemble the version now available for review. Interested citizens may find copies of the plan in .pdf format on DNR's website at www.iowadnr.com. Anyone without internet access may request a copy on CD-ROM or in print format. Comments will be accepted through June 6 by mail addressed to Wildlife Plan, c/o DNR Wildlife Research Station, 1436-255th Street, Boone, IA 50036, or by email addressed to wildlifeplan@dnr.state.ia.us. Use the Boone mailing address, or phone 515-432-2823, to request a CD or paper copy.

###

SPRING TROUT FISHING

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The path narrowed. The bank grew steeper. It took a little effort to get back to this bend in the stream. There were trout here. And when the last angler left at the end of the day, there would still be trout here.

The angler count had dropped as Department of Natural Resources hatchery worker Tom Rohde and I worked our way back to the upper end of Swiss Valley Park. Earlier, there were one, two, maybe three anglers at the familiar holes in the more accessible lower end. For them, it was just a few steps off the road to reach one of the pools where trout would be stocked. A couple had a half-pound rainbow or two in the bucket already, waiting for the truck with 400 more to be stocked in this coldwater stream threading through the Dubuque County park.

A couple of the regulars asked Rohde about his homemade bottle cap jigs, or a pickling recipe. “I get to know them all pretty well throughout the year. It’s pretty enjoyable coming over and seeing them,” admitted Rohde. “There’s also the campground nearby, so a lot of new people come out each week, too.”

Each year, more than 300,000 catchable sized trout are stocked in about 50 streams throughout northeast Iowa. Most are rainbows; hatched at the Manchester hatchery and raised there or at two other rearing stations throughout the region. Brown and brook trout, too, about 20-30,000 of each are also stocked through the season, too. Anglers--30,000 or so--pay an extra \$11 fee each year to support the trout program.

It is a program that provides trout on a schedule; the regular stocking schedule is posted online (www.iowadnr.com) via phone (563-927-5736) or through a calendar available from the hatcheries. However, it is the ‘unannounced schedule’ that keeps anglers guessing. “Once a week, we come over to Swiss Valley and stock 200 brook trout unannounced,” noted Rohde. “Not everybody likes to follow the stocking truck. It helps ensure fish are in the stream when they come out, say a day or so later.”

Manchester stocks three other streams, too. Another half dozen spots get ‘unannounced’ trout from Big Spring and Decorah stock. “A lot of the (unannounced) sites are more remote; tougher access,” explained hatchery worker Randy Mack. “People have to work to get back to them a little more. We stock more brown trout in the unannounced areas, too. They are harder to catch; more likely to be in the streams longer.”

As Rohde and I hit the end of the line at Swiss Valley, the fishermen didn’t seem to mind. At ‘Big Rock,’ a pool just below a beaver dam with a limestone outcrop sitting in it, two anglers were flipping light jigs. One had a fly rod; the other a conventional reel with light line. As they talked with us, each caught and turned back a just-stocked trout. They had a good half-mile plus walk to get to the parking area. Their payoff was in the challenge. And the scenery. Rolling hills spread before them, surrounded by timber. Except for the occasional angler wandering through, they could have been 20 miles from civilization.

Back downstream, the anglers, the gear and the catch varied. “I come out four or five times a year; here, Bankston and Brush Creek,” offered Steve Saul of Marengo. He doesn’t plan around the stocking schedule. “Whenever. There’s usually fish around. Probably 60 percent of the time I’ll get my limit.”

Ron Lanser of Dubuque was a few bends down. Since he’s nearby, he gets out here a lot more. “I go up above a lot. We had some small brook trout Tuesday, (biting) up by the beaver ponds. There’s a lot of water up around there.”

With license plates ranging from all over Iowa; Johnson, Polk, Dubuque, Black Hawk, Clayton counties and more, trout anglers can pretty much dictate their degree of difficulty. Many streams remain just a couple steps from the car. You can make it even harder by trying your skills in one of the put and grow streams, featuring trout released as fingerlings—whose survival instincts resist being caught.

Or you can split the difference; put on your hiking boots and get away from the crowd, but still expect a fairly decent ‘return’ on your effort. “A lot of people come walk the trails; maybe bring their fishing pole and get their exercise while they get in some fishing,” observes Rohde after dropping the last 15 or 18 trout into a deep stretch with no one around. “Swiss Valley, for instances, is an excellent place to fish and get your exercise; and with beautiful places to get back to Nature.”

###

TREE AND SHRUB SEEDLINGS STILL AVAILABLE

Although spring is progressing fast, there is still time to order trees and shrubs for reforestation, wildlife habitat or to control soil erosion on acreages or farms. Recent rains are creating favorable planting conditions and it is best if plantings are completed by mid to late May.

“There are excellent supplies at the State Forest Nursery of native red, white, bur and swamp oak, walnut, silver maple, dogwood, wild plum and many other species,” said John Walkowiak, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau. These native trees and shrubs are adapted to Iowa’s extremes in weather, to Iowa’s soils and provide superior wildlife habitat, he said.

Conservation trees and shrubs are for sale by the State Forest Nursery at the cost of production. Prices range from \$25/100 plants for evergreen species, such as white pine, to \$45/100 plants for hardwood trees and shrubs like the oaks and redosier dogwood. The minimum order is 500 plants.

Several specialty packets designed in cooperation with the Iowa Chapters of the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever and Audubon Iowa are available for

conservation plantings as well. “These specialty packets contain 20 to 200 seedlings and sell from \$20 to \$90 and are great for improving wildlife and songbird habitat on your acreage,” Walkowiak said.

For more information or to order conservation trees and shrubs, call 1-800-865-2477 or www.iowatreeplanting.com

For more information, contact Walkowiak at 515-242-5966.

###

FINAL PRAIRIE RESCUE EVENTS SET FOR MAY 14

DES MOINES – The sixth annual Iowa Statewide Prairie Rescue – a series of volunteer efforts to save Iowa’s prairie habitat – will come to a close this weekend. Iowans have their last chance to take part when rescues occur at Harrier Marsh and Rochester Cemetery on May 14.

Volunteers at Harrier Marsh will meet at 10 a.m. and will plant 2,000-3,000 native Iowa wildflowers. The rescue will last until 3 p.m. with a break for hot dogs, chips and drinks. Volunteers should bring watering cans if possible, dress for the weather and wear mud boots.

Volunteers at the Cedar County Rochester Cemetery should meet at 10 a.m. They will remove invasive garlic mustard and should bring gloves and water. Directions to both events are available at www.inhf.org/prairierescue2005.html. Individuals, families and organizations are all invited to participate.

The May 14 events are part of a larger effort to preserve the dwindling Iowa prairie. Native grasslands once covered 70 percent of the state, but has been reduced to 0.1 percent of their original size. The remnants, scattered in small patches throughout Iowa, now require the assistance of natural resources staff and volunteers to survive.

Prairie Rescue 2005 has invited volunteers to reconnect with Iowa’s prairie roots, and help save this beautiful habitat before it is lost forever. Roughly 25 events have occurred across the state throughout April and May. Sponsors include the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and other natural resources groups.

For more information about the Harrier Marsh event, contact Bill Johnson at (515) 432-2823 or at William.Johnson@dnr.state.ia.us. For more information about the Rochester Cemetery event contact Casey J. Kohrt at (319) 530-0585 or at cjkohrt@hotmail.com or Pete Kollasch at (319) 358-9458 or at pkollasch@igsb.uiowa.edu.

For more information about Statewide Prairie Rescue 2005 contact Cathy Engstrom at (515) 288-1846 or at cengstrom@inhf.org or Katie Kemp at (515) 281-3134 or at Katie.Kemp@dnr.state.ia.us.

###

IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of May 3, 2005

www.iowadnr.com

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Due to unseasonably cold temperatures last weekend, fishing activity was minimal. River stage at Guttenberg is 9.4 feet and 10 feet at Bellevue and dropping. Water temperature was 49 degrees in **Pool 10** and 52 degrees in **Pool 12**, but will gradually rise throughout the week. Water transparency is clear. The Lock and Dam gates at Guttenberg have returned to normal operation. Fishing activity should resume as air temperatures return to more seasonal levels. Largemouth bass fishing was fair in **Pool 12 to 14** backwaters over newly emerged vegetation and a few were caught around woody structure. Huge common carp—up to 40 pounds—were biting on worms and night crawlers at the mouth of O’Leary’s Lake (**Pool 12**). White bass fishing was good in Middle Sabula Lake (**Pool 13**) using small spinner baits.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshiek): Walleye fishing is good using dark colored jigs.

Turkey River (Winneshiek, Fayette and Clayton): Water clarity is very good and walleye fishing is good using jigs or minnows. Smallmouth bass are also beginning to bite. Trout fishing is excellent in Clayton County near the Big Spring Hatchery.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Bluegill fishing is fair to good on a piece of worm fished near the bottom.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Crappie fishing is good using small jigs or minnows fished under a slip bobber next to brush.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Crappie fishing is good on small jigs or minnows fished under a bobber next to structure.

Big Woods, Brinker, and South Prairie Lakes (Black Hawk) and **Casey Lake** (Tama): Fishing will improve later this week as air and water temperatures rise.

Trout fishing is excellent and stream conditions are good to excellent. For current trout stocking information, contact the Iowa DNR at 563-927-5736 or go on-line

at www.iowadnr.com and check the fisheries web pages to view the 2005 stocking calendar.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Crappie fishing was slow at the Grade and Templar Park. Smallmouth and largemouth bass fishing also slowed considerably. White bass fishing has picked up and some large fish are being caught near Buffalo Run and the Footbridge. Northern pike no longer has a closed season at the lakes and there is an excellent population of large fish available.

West Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Fishing is fair for bluegills and crappies. Fish the Emerson Bay and Miller's Bay canals, and Lazy Lagoon with wax worms and small earthworms for bluegills. Crappies can be caught on minnows or tube jigs; think small in cold weather. Largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing is fair. Use small finesse worms and slow twitching suspended crankbaits. Anglers are catching some largemouth bass round docks.

East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): White bass fishing has been fair on the north end of the lake. Use small spinners or floating crankbaits.

Minnewashta (Dickinson): Anglers are catching a few walleye and white bass in the evening by the bridge using twisters and crankbaits.

Upper Gar (Dickinson): Panfish fishing is good around docks.

Silver Lake (Dickinson): Walleye fishing is still fair using twisters and shallow running crankbaits. The water is clear so try using solid colors. For live bait, try minnows or night crawlers on floating jigs heads or night crawler harnesses and work the bait slowly. Most shore activity has been on the west shore and Trappers Bay. Boat activity is concentrated around the island and the break lines on the south shore. The best time to fish is late evening.

Lost Island (Clay and Palo Alto): Walleye fishing is good. Try the east shore in the park or the southwest bridge. Anglers are catching some 9 to 10-inch crappies towards the evening.

Dog Creek (O'Brien): Crappie fishing is good around shore.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Walleye fishing is fair to good using twisters near shore. Remember there is a 15-inch minimum length limit on walleyes, with only one longer than 22 inches per day. Channel catfish fishing is excellent on live bait or shad entrails.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Channel catfish fishing is fair to good using shad entrails on the wind blown shorelines. Yellow bass have started biting near shore on small lead heads or mini-jigs. Fishing is good for 7 to 9-inch bullheads.

Brushy Creek (Webster): The recent cool, wet days has slowed fishing. As the weather warms, fishing should improve. Look for walleye along shore in 10 to 20 feet of water using minnows and leeches under a slip bobber. The bass will return to shallow water as it warms. Remember there is a 15-inch minimum length on bass. Anglers are catching a few bluegills.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing has slowed with the recent cool weather, but it should improve, along with yellow bass, as the temperature warms. Bullhead fishing is fair using night crawlers in the west end of the lake.

Briggs Woods Lake (Hamilton): Crappies are hitting on small jigs fished near shore.

Indian Lake – Eldred Sherwood Park (Hancock): Bluegill fishing is fair. Use small jigs and night crawlers near shore.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

Southwest

Fishing has slowed due to the cold temps and fish have moved into deeper water. Warmer temps will improve fishing again.

Green Valley (Union): Fishing is fair for large crappie over the deep rock structure. Big channel catfish can be caught using shad bait or liver in the shallow bays.

Three Mile (Union): Some walleye can be caught on crankbaits near the dam and over the rock piles. Crappies are starting to bite in deep wooded cover or over the deep brush piles. Channel catfish caught using blood bait or liver in the shallow bays and the upper end of the lake.

Twelve Mile (Union): Channel catfish can be caught on liver or blood baits at the upper end and in shallow bays.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Bluegill and crappie can be caught along the south dike using night crawlers and small jigs.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Channel catfish can be caught in shallow water. Crappie and largemouth bass can be caught from the rocks. Some bluegill can be caught from the rocks or flooded trees. The lake is within two feet of full and the boat ramp is operational.

Little River (Decatur): Some medium sized crappie can be caught over the deeper rocks and trees. Some bluegills are being caught in the shallows on night crawlers. Channel catfish can be caught from the upper end and shallow bays.

Badger Creek (Madison): Some bluegill and crappie can be caught from the deep rocks of the jetties and off the rocky roadways using crawlers or light jigs.

Wilson (Taylor): Some crappie can be caught from the dam using light jigs.

Viking (Montgomery): A few bluegills and crappies are being caught in the coves and around structure using tube jigs tipped with minnows.

Cold Springs (Cass): Fishing is slow for 6 to 8-inch crappies using jigs/minnows in 6 to 8-feet of water.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Recent fish surveys found a good number of walleye along beach area and north part of the lake near both boat ramps. Walleyes can be caught by wading in and casting smaller jigs with twister tails tipped with minnows in the shallow, sandy areas.

Orient (Adair): Fishing has slowed for 7 to 8-inch crappies along the rocks in the evening. Try drifting in deeper water.

Mormon Trail (Adair): A few crappies and catfish are being caught.

Greenfield (Adair): A few crappies are being caught around brush piles using minnows. Anglers are also catching a few bass and bluegills.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Cool temperatures have slowed fishing success. A few crappies are being caught in 6 to 8 feet of water around structure.

DeSoto Bend (Harrison): Walleye fishing is good. Anglers are slow trolling night crawlers and leeches near new brush piles. Crappie fishing has slowed with cool temps, but a few are being caught using tube jigs tipped with minnows in 6 to 8 feet of water near new brush piles.

Willow Lake (Harrison): A few crappies are being caught in the brush piles.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is fair using jigs and minnows. Largemouth bass fishing has been good, with a few nice-sized fish. Bluegill fishing has been slow.

Hickory Grove (Story): Crappie fishing has been good using crappie jigs. The fish are suspended just a couple of feet below the surface. Bluegill fishing is slow with worms/bobbers the best combination. Anglers are catching a few largemouth bass, but overall, fishing is still slow.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Bluegill fishing has been slow using jigs and wax worms. Crappie fishing has been fair to good using jigs and minnows. Largemouth bass and saugeye fishing has been good using soft bodied lures near the shore. Bullhead and channel catfish fishing has been fair using worms and/or chicken liver.

Big Creek (Polk): Crappie fishing has been spotty, with some good catches reported using jigs and minnows. Walleye fishing has been fair to good with spinner baits and bottom rigs.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good on jigs: most fish are 6 to 8 inches. Some nice sized walleye have been caught. Largemouth bass fishing has been spotty recently, although with warmer weather fishing should improve again.

Below Saylorville Dam (Polk): Crappie fishing was good to excellent in the tail waters of Saylorville; however the increased release rates from the reservoir has moved fish away from the tail water. Crappie fishing has been good in the backwater ponds below Saylorville. Northern pike, walleye and white bass fishing was good in the tail water prior to the increased release, so the best bet is to fish further downstream.

Lake Red Rock (Marion): Crappie fishing is starting to pickup. Try the shallow, warmer areas, and around the outlet from Roberts Creek. White bass fishing has been spotty, with the outlet from Roberts Creek one of the better areas.

Below Lake Red Rock (Marion): Walleye fishing is slow to fair in the tail water and white bass is good using jigs/minnows.

Roberts Creek (Marion): Crappie and white bass fishing has been fair to good near the outlet using jigs/minnow combinations.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill and crappie fishing has been slow to fair. Bluegills are being taken on wax worms and/or worms and crappies on jigs and minnows. Try the fishing jetties and off the fish house on the south side of the lake. Largemouth bass fishing has been good using spinner lures and also been hitting on hooks and worms.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19: Fishing on the Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19 continues to be slow due to high water levels and windy and cold weather conditions.

Fishing should improve as water levels and weather conditions stabilize. At the gauging station on Dam 16 (Muscatine) the water temperature is 54 degrees and the river pool stage is 10.40 feet and is expected to drop gradually over the next several days. In **Pool 16 to 19**, anglers continue to catch a few catfish but fishing has been slow. Channel catfish have been biting best on shad guts, shad, night crawlers, and green worms. Bluegill and crappie fishing has been slow in backwater areas.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): As this marsh complex is shallow it shouldn't take many warm days to bring the crappies back in to the shoreline trees. Nights in the 30s are keeping the crappies off the spawning beds.

Lake Darling (Washington): Warm weather forecasted for later this week should bring in the crappies.

Lake Geode (Henry): Angler numbers have been low due to the weather. The bridge over the spillway is still closed for rebuilding.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Anglers picked up a few crappies in the deeper water. They are also catching a few bluegills, but are working hard for them.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappie fishing remains slow. Some fish are being caught out in 20 to 25 feet of water using minnows. Channel catfish have been hitting on night crawlers. The best areas for channel catfish have been in places where the wind is blowing in.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Crappies have been hitting on small tube jigs. Largemouth bass have been biting on a variety of artificial lures.

Lake Hawthorn (Mahaska): Largemouth bass have been hitting on crankbaits fished around rocky shoreline areas. Crappies have been biting on jigs and minnows.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Largemouth bass have been hitting on spinner baits and other artificial presentations. Bluegills have been hitting on small jigs around structure.

Hannan Lake (Benton): Bluegills in the 6 to 9-inch range are still being caught, but have moved from the shallows to somewhat deeper water. Best reports are coming from 10 feet of water. Look for suspended fish as well.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): A few crappies are still being caught. The once shallow fish have moved out a little deeper during the cold spell. Look for suspended fish and try small jigs for best results.

Kent Park (Johnson): Some crappies and bluegills continue to be caught, although they are a bit deeper than last week. Try using small baits suspended off the bottom.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): The water level remains high but it is certainly fishable. Bank poles are starting to produce some nice flatheads.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

###